

## Guardian of US Nuclear Stockpile To Seek ISO 9000 Certification

WASHINGTON ? The US Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), which oversees the country's vast nuclear arsenal, has announced that it will seek ISO 9001:2000 certification of its federal offices as part of an extensive reorganization.

In his "Message on Creating the NNSA of the Future," dated December 17, 2002, NNSA Acting Administrator Linton Brooks stated, "to improve organizational discipline and efficiency, each element of the NNSA federal workforce will become ISO 9001 certified by December 31, 2004. The process will begin in June 2003."

Approximately 20 percent of NNSA's federal workforce at headquarters and in the field are slated to be cut by the end of fiscal year 2004, with the agency's headquarters taking a 30 percent cut. Security forces and the Navy Nuclear Propulsion program are not affected by the staff reductions, which are being administered through managed attrition.

Dennis Miotla, senior adviser on the ISO 9000 component of the restructuring project, tells QSU that the implementation will bring stability to the organization at a time of significant change.

"A lot of people said you shouldn't try to become ISO certified at the same time you're downsizing," Miotla explains. "We're thinking just the opposite is true. ? Now is the time to think about how you are going to accomplish your mission. How are you going to change the way you are going to do business? As you realize that, it is the optimal time to document it."

"The goal is to have the service center, the headquarters operations and the site offices all become independently certified," according to Miotla. "Our hope is to have individual site certification but kind of a network of information exchange across the whole NNSA."

A team made up of industry and government representatives is now being assembled and trained for the planned June 8 kickoff of the ISO 9000 implementation drive. In all, about 1,600 federal workers will be affected by the implementation.

"What happens after we become certified will probably determine whether any of the prime contractors develop an interest in doing the same thing," Miotla acknowledges. "I think we could all benefit from this."

While each of the federal sites will be pursuing a separate registration certificate, the implementation will incorporate a centralized corrective action tracking system, procedures database and training database.

"We can use this information to manage the complex as an entity so when, for example, we need people with a certain expertise we can look into the database and apply personnel where needed," he explains. "Centralized procedures are really going to allow us to have better internal communications on processes that involve multiple locations and we will have better configuration management, being able to implement changes instantaneously across the complex."

Brooks adopted the implementation schedule contained in a report prepared by the

Quality Standards? ISO 9001 Team that was part of the agency's Workload Reduction and Reengineering Initiatives carried out over the past year.

Brooks also stated that the reorganization follows the principles of the President's Management Agenda, which strives to improve government through performance and results. "In keeping with President Bush's vision, we are streamlining operations and oversight while clarifying roles and responsibilities," said Brooks. "The new, more responsive organization will improve federal management of our nuclear weapons complex."

Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham applauded the NNSA action, which, he noted, "implements the President's desire to make government more efficient and responsive and to focus on clear lines of accountability."

While the entire organizational structure is changing, the NNSA field organization will see the most dramatic change. Previously, the site offices that oversee NNSA's contractor operations reported to headquarters through three operations offices in Oakland, California; Las Vegas; and Albuquerque, New Mexico. All site offices now report directly to the NNSA administrator through the principal deputy. The operations office system is being eliminated.

A NNSA Service Center, providing procurement, human resources and other support services to the site offices, will be established using the expertise of the former operations offices. The NNSA Service Center will be located in Albuquerque. Consolidation of personnel will be completed by the end of fiscal year 2004, after which the Oakland office will close and the Nevada office will be reduced in size and concentrate on management of the Nevada Test Site, according to agency officials.

"We have worked hard this year to make sure our reorganization is done right. We will manage the reductions in a way that is fair to our outstanding people, while ensuring that the NNSA of the future will have a world-class business environment that eliminates duplication and micromanagement and provides more effective federal oversight," Brooks said.

NNSA is a semiautonomous agency that carries out the national security responsibilities of the Department of Energy. It maintains the US nuclear weapons stockpile, promotes international nuclear nonproliferation and provides the US Navy with safe and effective nuclear propulsion.

"The downsizing is something we think we need to do," observes Miotla. "In this reorganization we eliminated an entire layer of management nationwide. In so doing we've obviously changed fundamentally the way we do business. Rather than rely on every site to figure this out for themselves, we're going to collectively define how we are going to do business."